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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SUGGESTION: A Research into the Subconscious Nature of Man and Society. By Boris Sidis, M.A., Ph.D., Associate in Psychology at the Pathological Institute of the New York State Hospitals. With an Introduction by Professor William James. D. Appleton & Co., 1898. Pp. vii., 386.

Dr. Sidis opens with a discussion of the phenomena of suggestion, including in it the results of some interesting and original experiments, develops upon this foundation his theory of the dual nature of man, and concludes by applying that theory to the explanation of many more or less closely related groups of phenomena, notably those of insanity and of crowd and mob psychology.

While Dr. Sidis's theories are not novel in their essential traits, his book is written in a vigorous and forceful style, and contains much fresh illustrative material which will repay examination.

His theory is essentially an extension of Pierre Janet's doctrine to the field of the normal. Not only in the hysterical, but in the normal human being as well, there exist realms of mind distinct from the empirical consciousness. This unknown region should not be conceived with Myers as the transcendent reserve of a spiritual personality,—rather does it represent the functioning of cortical cells disassociated from the central coherent system which constitutes the physical basis of the empirical consciousness. The processes of the subwaking consciousness are usually unknown to us, although their effects are frequently traceable in the normal life, but occasionally, in dream, trance, and hallucination, the actual content of the subwaking is intruded into the normal upper consciousness.

In its character the subwaking consciousness is far inferior to the normal, and it usually lacks personality. Dr. Sidis has clearly grasped the conception of impersonal consciousness, and his description of the six chief types of conscious organization is one of the best things in the book.

The best opportunity of studying the traits of the subwaking self is in hypnosis and in some forms of insanity. In the mob, also, we see the activity of the upper self temporarily quiescent, while the hitherto dormant lower bursts out in outrage and excess.

This attempt to explain mob violence by reference to a secondary consciousness is akin to Le Bon's statement that the individual member of the mob is in a state analogous to the hypnotic, but is

not to the present writer convincing. No such *deus ex machinâ* is needed to explain the irresistible instinct to conform one's conduct to that of the crowd,—for that, natural selection suffices. Even if there were no evidence for a native instinct, the changed conditions in which the individual finds himself, the total removal of the social sanction (or, rather, its attachment to an unusual class of conduct), would sufficiently account for the temporary suspension or intensification of the ethical instincts based upon it. The experimental evidence also which Dr. Sidis has amassed, although showing both ingenuity and patience, falls far short of proving the existence of the subwaking self in the normal individual.

Dr. Sidis's book is marked throughout by a degree of confidence in the doctrines set forth which seems to the present writer a little premature in view of the scantiness and ambiguous character of the evidence now in our possession. But if he can supply us with more experiments like those on the hyperæsthesia of vision here reported, and more cases like that of the Rev. Thomas Hanna, he will put the world of psychologists in his debt.

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A CONCISE HISTORY OF RELIGION. By F. J. Gould. Vols. I., II., and III., pp. 154, 209, 292. London: Watts & Co.

In these volumes, "issued for the Rationalist Press Committee," Mr. Gould makes an able and laborious attempt to accomplish what seems an impossible task—that of writing a history of religion which shall be at once "concise" and satisfactory. Something, of course, depends on what is meant by conciseness. Bernier, in the seventeenth century, wrote an "abridgment" of the philosophy of Gassendi in eight large volumes, to which he added other seven by way of supplement. But Mr. Gould is concise on quite another scale. He puts the whole of religion, except Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism, into a small volume of about one hundred and fifty octavo pages. Even the cleverest manipulation can hardly make that satisfactory, and the result must inevitably be either jejune or indigestible. Doubtless Mr. Gould has in view the plain man who is interested in religion but has no time to read voluminous histories. Yet somehow one cannot help feeling that here is another case of the current fallacy of "essences," the fallacy that a large amount of physical or intellectual nourishment can be so boiled down that it may be carried in a man's waistcoat pocket.